

FY 2013 Clinical Educator Grants Program



South Central (VISN 16) MIRECC Clinical Educator Grants Program

I. Background

Funded in October 1998, the South Central (VISN 16) Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) is one of ten MIRECCs in the Department of Veterans Affairs. Congress mandated the establishment of MIRECCs to improve the provision of healthcare services to Veterans living with mental illness through research and education and through the development of improved models and systems for delivering mental healthcare in VHA. The mission of the South Central MIRECC is *“to promote equity in engagement, access, and quality of mental health care for Veterans facing barriers to care, especially rural Veterans.”*

II. Purpose

The purpose of the Clinical Educator Grants Program is to fund development of innovative clinical education tools that benefit the mental health care of rural and other under-served Veterans. The Program supports the development of unique clinical education tools by frontline clinicians and investigators at VA parent facilities and Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC). The Program may extend or complement research and demonstration projects through the development of clinical tools, intervention materials, training programs, and treatment manuals when supported by evidence. Completed products are disseminated by the MIRECC. See examples of products at www.mirecc.va.gov/VISN16/clinicalEducationProducts.asp.

A focus on rural and other under-served Veterans may be demonstrated by 1) development of a product specific to those populations, 2) testing the product in CBOC or community settings, 3) soliciting feedback and review from CBOC clinicians, or 4) involving other CBOC staff as co-applicants on the grant.

Educator awards are typically employed in one of two ways, although you are not limited to these approaches:

1. *Apply existing educational materials in a new way* (e.g., adapt materials to Veterans in CBOCs, deliver interventions via smartphone, compile a manual for conducting brief cognitive behavioral therapy in primary care clinics);
2. *Develop a new educational intervention and pilot it* (e.g., create and assess a new patient education intervention, like the SAFE family education curricula or the Courage sexual trauma group treatment manual, or deliver an intervention to enhance treatment adherence, like the Orientation to Group Psychotherapy DVD).

III. Eligibility

VISN 16 clinicians, researchers, evaluators, and educators who are VA Mental Health staff or who are collaborating with VA Mental Health staff are eligible to apply. A single individual is the “Principal Applicant” even if the project is a collaborative effort. For collaborations across VA sites where an individual at each site has a leadership role, those individuals are “Co-Principal Applicants”.

Trainees may apply, although **a permanent VA staff member must be a co-applicant**. Veteran consumers or non-VA community members can be co-applicants but cannot be the Principal















Applicant. Awarded funds will be transferred to a Mental Health Fund Control Point at a VA medical center. Awardees are identified as "Affiliate MIRECC Educator(s)" during the course of their project.

IV. Award

An award is between \$500 and \$7,000. Up to \$10,000 may be awarded for collaborations across facilities.

V. Use of Grant Funds

Congress and VHA have strict regulations on how these funds can be used. The table below provides general guidelines about what can and cannot be purchased with these funds.

You CAN purchase these items	You CANNOT purchase these items
 Travel of a non-VA employee to a VA site (e.g., a guest speaker)	 Travel by VA employees
 VA hiring of a new and temporary employee (please note that approval from your HR department is required; this can be a cumbersome and slow process and success varies by site).	 Salary or honorariums to VA employees (even for work on personal time)
 Incentives for participation (e.g., Canteen coupons, door prizes, etc.)	 Food (including participant snacks)
 Commercial materials to be used in the development of your project	 Lodging
 Professional services (e.g., voice recording; computer programming; web page design) that cannot be provided by your VA facility. Please check with your facility to ensure that a service is not available.	 Photocopying or binding that can be provided by your VA facility
 Material reproduction that cannot be provided by your VA facility. Please check with your facility to ensure that this service is not available.	 Equipment or IT (computers, projectors, CD players, and some software)
 Additional materials and/or supplies that are not available at your facility and are needed for the <i>development</i> (not <i>sustainment</i>) of your project, such as textbooks, guides, etc.	 Reproduction of electronic data (e.g., audiotapes, videotapes, CDs) that can be provided by your VA facility

****Please note the MIRECC can make available at no charge the services of a medical editor. This editor can assist with copy editing of any educational product that you develop as part of this grant process.****

VI. Budget Justification

Prepare an itemized budget using Attachment A. Include a descriptive justification for each item. Explain in some detail why you need the item. If a similar item or service is commonly available through the Care/Service Lines, please state why the purchase is being requested. Only include items in your budget that have been mentioned in the proposal.

VII. Planning a Project and Spending the Funds

Before you begin writing, the first step is to talk to your local MIRECC site contact.

Site Contacts:

Jackson VA – Dr. Randy Burke Oklahoma City VA – Dr. Tom Teasdale**
 Houston VA – Dr. Melinda Stanley** New Orleans VA – Dr. Joe Constans**
 Little Rock VA – Dr. Jeff Pyne** All other sites – Dr. Michael Kauth, Dr. Geri Adler

* Contact information can be found in Outlook.

** MIRECC Site Leader

Get advice about whether your idea is innovative, unique, doable, and fundable. The MIRECC may be able to help connect you with a partner or co-applicant who has expertise in areas that you need on your team. Getting advice from your site contact as well as others who are knowledgeable about your content area significantly improves your chances of being funded. Good advice will save you time and effort and result in a stronger application.

Please keep in mind some important fiscal limitations. Awards are usually announced in November. Funds are often transferred by December. **Clinical Educator Grant funds MUST be spent or obligated for spending (in the Fiscal system) before the end of the fiscal year (September 30), or risk being swept by the facility and returned to VA Central Office.** Swept funds cannot be returned. Therefore, plan to spend your funds between January and late August. You are not required to complete your project by late August. However, our expectation is that the project will be completed in 12-18 months.

If your proposal is too big to be completed in one fiscal year (that is, by the end of September), consider dividing it into two phases (e.g., developing program materials in Year 1, and applying and evaluating the materials in Year 2). If you choose this approach, propose “Part one” in the current application, and then briefly describe the future phase(s) of the project (stating that you intend to apply for funding for that part of the project). We cannot fund future phases in advance, but it will help your current application if reviewers know your next steps.

VIII. Use and Distribution of MIRECC Clinical Educator Grant Products

All products developed with support from a Clinical Educator Grant are South Central MIRECC / VHA products. All products must acknowledge funding from the MIRECC. These products are not for profit and will be distributed to VA facilities at no cost. Products may be posted on the MIRECC web site and other VA web sites.

IX. How to Apply

A. What do I send, when is it due, and where do I send it?

An application outline is attached. Applications for the fiscal year 2013 funding cycle should be submitted by email to Dr. Geri Adler (Geri.adler@va.gov) and must be received by **4:00 PM (CT), November 30, 2012.** ***Most applicants are asked to make changes, provide more information, and submit a revision.***

When submitting your application, please be sure to:

- **Cc: the local MIRECC Site Leader listed above and your VAMC Mental Health Care/Service Line Chief/Director for concurrence. If at a CBOC, you may also need concurrence from your Clinic Director. *If the Care/Service Line Chief/Director or MIRECC Site Leader are not included on the email, we cannot accept your proposal.***

IMPORTANT NOTE - Talk to your Chief/Director(s) about your project and give your Chief/Director(s) time to read your proposal BEFORE submitting it. Some proposals have not been accepted because the Care/ Service Line Chief/Director did not know about them and did not support them.

B. How long is the application and what should it look like?

The application should describe your project in **1500 words or less** using a **12-point font** and **1-inch margins**. The budget (with justification text) is additional and should describe any supportive services that you plan to use (e.g., the name of graphic design services that you will use). A suggested outline for writing your application is below.

C. What is the process?

All applications are reviewed by the MIRECC Education Core and outside experts, when necessary. Applications are rated in terms of consistency with the MIRECC mission, appropriate goals, target population, attention to population needs, feasibility of plans, appropriate evaluation, potential outcomes, justified budget, etc. All applicants will receive written feedback about their proposal. The review committee often asks applicants to make specific changes in their project or provide additional information in a revised application. Revised applications are reviewed for adherence to the review committee's recommendations. Funding decisions are usually made by late October.

X. Questions

If you have questions about the application or the appropriateness of your project, please contact Dr. Geri Adler, MIRECC Education Coordinator, Houston at Geri.adler@va.gov or 713-794-8660.

Outline for Applications

I. CONTACT INFORMATION

- A. Title of the project
- B. Name(s) of the principal applicant and co-applicants
- C. Postal address
- D. Name of your facility
- E. Contact phone number

II. INTRODUCTION / JUSTIFICATION

- A. Provide a brief statement of the clinical issue or problem that will be addressed by your project
- B. What, if any, materials currently exist to address this need? [*Search the national MIRECC website (<http://www.mirecc.va.gov/>) and the Internet!*]
- C. How does your project meet the MIRECC goal of improving access to evidence-based practices to rural and underserved Veterans?

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

- A. Who is the target audience (Veterans, families, VA staff)?
- B. How many Veterans / people will take part in the project? Give a number.
- C. What do you plan to do in your project? What are the start and finish dates?
- D. How will you evaluate your project? How will you make sure your project is carried out as planned? How do you plan to measure your outcomes? How will you know if your project was a success?

III. FUTURE PLANS

- A. What might be the long-term impact of your project?

IV. BUDGET SHEET (outside the 1500 word limit)

- A. Individually list all materials/services you will need to purchase, including costs.
- B. Provide brief text justifying each purchase
- C. Sum all costs to give a total cost for the project.

Additional Tips for Success:

1. Be complete but brief. Reviewers don't know what you want to do unless you tell them clearly. Have colleagues read drafts of your proposal and solicit feedback. Proposals that are vague, general, or duplicate what has already been done receive low scores.
2. Review previously funded projects and search the national MIRECC web site, Internet, library, and educational catalogs for products similar to what you propose. Use your search to justify the uniqueness of your proposal.
3. Make your project doable. Plan a project that you can complete (or nearly so) between about January and mid-September. Bigger projects may need to be divided into smaller pieces and separate grants.
4. Make your product easily exportable. Materials that can be put in electronic form or posted on a web site are exportable. DVDs are exportable. Projects that involve purchasing commercial videos for each site are not easily exportable. Products that are specific to one facility are not exportable.
5. Work with colleagues on the project. Accomplishing a project on your own can be tough. Working with others can be more satisfying and can make it easier to stick to deadlines.
6. Get feedback on your written proposal. Have colleagues who are not involved in the project and the MIRECC site leader read your proposal. If they don't understand what you want to do, the reviewers won't either. Write clearly. Sometimes people don't ask for feedback because they are anxious about their writing. However, not getting feedback on your proposal is a fatal flaw.
7. Get advice from MIRECC staff or from clinicians who have had funded projects! Call/email now! Below is also a short list of people who have developed MIRECC-funded education products and who are willing to provide informal consultation. Contact information can be found in the Outlook Global Address List.

Houston – Dr. Melinda Stanley, Dr. Jeff Cully, Dr. Quang (Charlie) Nguyen
Jackson – Dr. Randy Burke, Dr. Jefferson Parker
Little Rock – Dr. Jeff Pyne, Dr. Pat Dubbert
New Orleans – Dr. Joe Constans
Oklahoma City – Dr. Michelle Sherman, Dr. Tom Teasdale
All other sites – Dr. Michael Kauth

Attachment A: Budget Table

Item With Justification	Quantity	Cost per item	Total Cost
Grand Total:			